

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 005697

SIPDIS

FOR U/S LARSON AND USTR ZOELICK FROM AMBASSADOR MEL SEMBLER  
STATE PASS USDA  
STATE PASS USTR  
DEPT ALSO FOR EB-CEKUTA  
USDA FOR FAS/OA/TERPSTRA  
ITP/SHEIKH AND MACKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2007  
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TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [IT](#) [PGOV](#) [TBIO](#) [EUN](#)  
SUBJECT: REENGAGING PM BERLUSCONI ON BIOTECH

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR MEL SEMBLER, FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) JOINED BY AMBASSADORS HALL AND NICHOLSON I HAD DINNER NOVEMBER 12 WITH PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI, HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISOR GIANNI LETTA, AND SEVERAL OTHERS. WE USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPRESS UPON THE PM THE NEGATIVE EFFECT EU POLICY WAS HAVING ON THE WILLINGNESS OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO DISTRIBUTE BIOTECH FOOD TO THEIR STARVING POPULATIONS AND THE MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF THESE ACTIONS. BERLUSCONI AGREED THAT ITALY NEEDED TO HAVE A SCIENCE-BASED POLICY, AND SAID HE WOULD HELP US WHERE HE COULD WITHIN EU COUNCILS. I TOLD BERLUSCONI PRIVATELY ONCE AGAIN THAT HIS AG MINISTER CONTINUED TO DRIVE A BIOTECH POLICY BASED MORE ON EMOTION THAN REASON, AND THAT HE AS PM NEEDED TO GET MORE INVOLVED PERSONALLY IF HE WANTED TO COUNTER THAT TREND. HE TOOK THE POINT.

12. (C) BERLUSCONI APPEARED SURPRISED AND CONCERNED WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT A WTO CASE WAS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY IF NO SOLUTION TO EUROPEAN INTRANSIGENCE WAS FOUND SOON. HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UPCOMING ITALIAN EU PRESIDENCY, AND ASKED TO BE KEPT INFORMED.

13. (C) GETTING THE PM'S ATTENTION ON BIOTECH AGAIN IS IMPORTANT. WE NEED TO KEEP HIM ENGAGED, AND ONE WAY TO DO THIS IS TO LET HIM KNOW DIRECTLY OUR CONCERNS AS WE MOVE TOWARD DECISIONS ABOUT A WTO CASE AND OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR BIOTECH POLICY. IN THE NEXT WEEK, THIS EMBASSY, EMBASSY  
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VATICAN AND FODAG WILL PRESENT BY CABLE, OUR UPDATED AND COORDINATED TRI-MISSION PLAN TO ADVANCE USG INTENTS ON BIOTECH. THE PLAN WILL IDENTIFY RESOURCES TO UNDERPIN OUR ACTIVITIES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR REACTIONS, GUIDANCE, AND SUPPORT.  
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